
The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic places worthy of preservation. Over 1,300 historic places in South Carolina — some individual properties, some entire districts — have been listed in the Register. They range from Indian campgrounds dating to 10,000 B.C. to buildings associated with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, from grand mansions to modest farmhouses, and from upcountry textile mill villages to Pee Dee railroad towns to lowcountry rice fields. These places link us tangibly to our past and contribute to our understanding of the history of our communities, our state, and our nation.

The National Park Service, under the Secretary of the Interior, maintains the National Register of Historic Places. In each of the states and territories a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) coordinates the nomination of properties to the National Register before the applications are submitted to the National Park Service. In South Carolina the SHPO is a program of the Department of Archives and History.

What properties are eligible for listing in the National Register?

Buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts can be listed in the Register. Generally they must be at least fifty years old, but all properties that are fifty years old are not eligible for listing. The property must also possess significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture and retain its historic integrity. This means that the property must not have lost the physical qualities that convey its significance. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation are listed at the end of this brochure.

How does the National Register program encourage the preservation of historic properties?

National Recognition

National Register listing honors a property by recognizing its importance to its community, the state, or the nation. This recognition increases local awareness of the value of historic properties and can validate and spur preservation efforts. In South Carolina, owners of properties listed in the National Register can purchase and display National Register plaques.

Financial Incentives

There are some financial incentives for preserving National Register properties. These include:

- ◆ **20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit:** Owners and some lessees of income-producing buildings listed in the National Register may be eligible for a federal income tax credit equal to 20% of their rehabilitation expenses under the Tax Reform Act of 1986.
- ◆ **10% State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit:** In South Carolina, taxpayers who qualify for the 20% federal income tax credit may also qualify for a state income tax credit of 10% of their rehabilitation costs under the South Carolina Rehabilitation Incentives Act.
- ◆ **Easement Donations:** The federal Internal Revenue Code also provides for federal income, estate, and gift tax deductions for charitable contributions of partial interests in a historic structure that is listed in the National Register or a “historically important land area.”
- ◆ **25% State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit:** Under the South Carolina Historic Rehabilitation Incentives Act, owners who rehabilitate their historic residences that are listed in or individually eligible for the National Register may be eligible to subtract 25% of the costs of many expensive repairs and renovations from their state income taxes.

◆ **Historic Preservation Grants:**

Organizations, institutions, and government entities that own National Register properties may be eligible for grants for preservation planning projects. If the property is within the jurisdiction of a Certified Local Government, these groups may also be eligible for grants for stabilization and weatherproofing. Certified Local Governments are designated by the National Park Service.

Protection

Federal and state laws encourage, but do not mandate, the preservation of National Register properties. National Register listing results in the following limited protection:

- ◆ **Consideration in planning for federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects:** Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the effect of their actions on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register. Federal agencies must consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (on Catawba tribal lands) when planning projects that involve federal funds, permits, licenses, or property.
- ◆ **Consideration in planning for certain state-assisted projects:** State laws and regulations require the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to consider the effect of proposed projects on historic properties when deciding whether or not to approve mining permits or Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) permits and certifications (in the eight coastal counties). For projects requiring OCRM approval or mining permits, the SHPO helps DHEC evaluate the effect of proposed projects on historic properties that are listed in or eligible for the National Register. State law also establishes a review process for projects involving National Register-

listed properties owned or leased by the State of South Carolina. The SHPO works with state agencies to incorporate historic preservation concerns with their needs.

In some communities, local ordinances provide protection for historic properties, but these ordinances are established by local governments; they are not part of the National Register program. South Carolina local governments can designate historic properties and protect them with ordinances whether or not they are listed in the National Register.

Will National Register listing place restrictions on my property?

Owners of private property listed in the National Register have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them, or even to maintain them. Owners can do anything they want to their properties, provided there is no federal involvement (funds, licenses, or permits) and they do not need a state mining permit or a permit or certification from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

What is the procedure for listing a property in the National Register?

Anyone can prepare a nomination to the National Register. All nominations undergo scrutiny in a process that begins with a preliminary review by the SHPO. SHPO staff provide technical assistance to individuals, organizations, and consultants who prepare nominations. Completed and technically correct nominations are presented to a State Board of Review, which meets at least twice

each year. The Board of Review is composed of professionals with expertise in history, architectural history, archaeology, architecture, and other preservation-related fields, and interested citizens. Nominations approved by the Board of Review are submitted to the National Park Service, which makes the final decision concerning whether a property will be listed.

Where can I get more information?

- ◆ Visit the SHPO website at www.state.sc.us/scdah/histrcpl.htm. The National Park Service website at www.cr.nps.gov/nr/ also includes much information about the National Register program.
- ◆ Contact Andrew Chandler (803-896-6179 or chandler@scdah.state.sc.us) or Tracy Power (803-896-6182 or power@scdah.state.sc.us).

National Register Criteria

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, and:

- A. are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Exceptions to Criteria

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years are considered ineligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria, or if they can be categorized as:

- A. a religious property that derives its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- B. a building or structure that has been removed from its original location but is significant primarily for its architectural value or because it is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

- C. a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance when there is no other site or building directly associated with the individual's productive life; or
- D. a cemetery that derives its primary significance either from the graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- E. a reconstructed building that is accurately executed, is located in a suitable environment, is presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same associations has survived; or
- F. a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or
- G. a property achieving significance within the last fifty years if it is of exceptional importance.

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South Carolina
Department of
Archives & History
8301 Parklane Road
Columbia, SC 29223-4905

**State Historic
Preservation Office**

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